



Bedfordshire Choice Based Lettings Scheme: Your Questions Answered



Who is involved?

Bedfordshire's Local Authorities and two largest Housing Associations are working together to set up a new Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme:

Aragon Housing Association
Bedford Borough Council
bpha
Luton Borough Council
Mid Bedfordshire District Council
South Bedfordshire District Council



The six housing providers above have formed a partnership and developed a joint CBL scheme and Allocations Policy. Throughout this document, the organisations above are referred to as 'Partners'.

If you would like a copy of our joint Allocations Policy you can either download it from websites or collect one from any of the Partners' offices.

What is Choice Based Lettings (CBL)?

CBL aims to provide applicants with as much choice as possible in where they live. At the moment, most Housing Register Allocation Schemes in Bedfordshire use Points to assess an applicant's housing need. Usually, the Partner landlord allocates vacancies before the applicant has seen any details of the property being offered.

So what's changing?

CBL uses Groups or Bands instead of points to assess an applicant's housing need. The Bedfordshire scheme has 4 Groups as follows:

Group 1	Urgent Housing Need
Group 2	High Housing Need
Group 3	Medium Housing Need
Group 4	Low Priority

Who falls into each Group?

The exact details of how an applicant's priority is assessed can be found in the Draft CBL Policy and Allocation Scheme. A brief guide to how priority will be assessed is set out below:

- Group 1** Tenants of the Partner organisations requiring an urgent Management Transfer or Statutory Homeless applicants, who have an urgent need to move due to a risk of violence.
- Group 2** Households accepted as statutory homeless, not at risk of violence
Households requiring an urgent Management Transfer, not at risk of violence
Households subject to a Demolition/Closing Order
Households under-occupying the Partners' accommodation in the Local Authority area, or accommodation to which the Partners have nomination rights.
Tenants occupying tenancies under the Rent Agriculture Act 1976 where the "Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee" confirms the tenant must vacate.
- Group 3** Overcrowding or lacking bedrooms
Households accepted as homeless non priority
Households in residential Hostel or Mother & Baby Care unit or leaving care

- Applicants with a legal notice to quit/possession order from their private sector landlord
- Households in Assured Shorthold/Tied tenancies/private sector lodgings/ living with family or friends (not including Rent Agricultural Act 1976 tenancies)
- Households with dependant child or children, or pregnant
- Households without a water supply and/or indoor sanitation
- Applicants with medical problems affected by their housing
- Applicants with a need for support and resettlement
- Applicants suffering racial/sexual/domestic harassment or violence

Group 4

- Homeowners
- Bedfordshire LA/HA tenants where current property is suitable
- RSL/LA/HA tenants living outside Bedfordshire
- Tenants with an assured/secure tenancy where the property is suitable
- High income households/ savings/ investments over a specified level
- Applicants with no local connection to Local Authorities' area

In **Group 3**, the different circumstances that apply to each applicant will give a total priority 'Level' in the Group. So, for example, an applicant without enough bedrooms will have less priority than an applicant without enough bedrooms but who has also been given Notice to Quit by a landlord.

If an applicant's circumstances change, they can move up and down the priority ladder in Group 3, or even into a different Group.

What will happen when there is a vacant property?



All vacancies will be openly advertised, and anyone who is registered for the CBL scheme, and who is eligible for the vacancy, will be able to express an interest in properties they would like to be offered. This is sometimes called 'bidding' for vacancies.

Advertising will be either weekly or fortnightly, and applicants will need to bid within a set timescale (usually 4 or 5 days from the advert appearing). Once bidding closes, the Partner landlord will identify the highest priority applicants who have bid.

Up to three applicants will be invited to view the property. Where more than one applicant is in a Group, or at the same priority Level in Group 3, length of time waiting on the CBL Register will decide who is first to be offered a viewing. The property will be offered to the highest priority applicant first; if it is refused, it will be offered to the second highest, and so on.

How will properties be advertised?

We want to know how you would like us to advertise. There are several options: for instance, in a Property flyer or brochure, on Partners' websites or in local papers. Go to the end of this leaflet to see how you can tell us.

How will applicants be able to ‘bid’?

Again there are several options: on a website, by telephone, by text message or by sending in a paper coupon are some examples of how other Schemes allow applicants to bid. We want to know how you would prefer to bid. Go to the end of this leaflet to see how you can tell us.

When will CBL start?

The Government wants all housing providers to be offering Choice by 2010. The Bedfordshire scheme is using a two phased approach: a new assessment Scheme, using Groups instead of Points, will be introduced by all the Partners during 2008. The launch of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme itself is due in March/April 2009.



Tell us what you think:

Fill in a questionnaire: you can do this on-line at some of the Partner websites, or print out a paper copy to complete and return. Or phone us and we will send you a questionnaire in the post.

Come to one of the consultation events happening in October 2007. Look out for details nearer the time, or phone us and we will tell you what is planned for a location near you.

Contact the Partners:

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Luton Borough Council The Town Hall Luton LU1 2BQ	www.luton.gov.uk Tel: 01582 546000
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